

Long Distance

Sweat was dripping down as I ran under the hot blazing sun in the field. As I ran hard to complete a certain distance, I remembered what my friend once told me, “Run hard when it’s hard to run”. It never fails to boost my courage and determination whenever I think of it. When I was only a Primary 5 student, sprinting and long distance running had already become an important part of my life, and between these two different event groups, I prefer long distance running. Long distance contains only twelve letters; however it is not as easy as it seems.

When people got to know that I am a long distance runner, their responses would be the same: “So your stamina should be very good!” Why are long distance runners stereotyped as stamina-pro?” To me, long distance running is not about stamina, it is all about determination and courage. In a marathon, the runners who come in first and last have only a difference: timing. Yet they have the same level of perseverance: They begin at the same starting point and end on the same finishing point.

We can never deny that we have not encountered any challenges in life, and it is determination which carries us through. I always imagine my life as a never-ending long distance run, full with ups and downs: persistently running up steep slopes; pacing myself well when going down slopes; and enjoying when I am on flat grounds.

I remember the first time I ran a 4.2km mini-marathon. When I completed the race, my senior told me: “The miracle isn’t that you finished, the miracle is that you had the courage to start the race.” Yes, courage. You need courage to start a race as you might think: “Oh my, it will be a long way to go!” and immediately feel that you cannot do it and back off. However, with courage, you will say: “Sure! I can and I will finish the race”.

I had once witnessed an athlete who was leading a 400m race. However, when he was reaching the finishing line, his leg cramped and he fell down. He quickly picked himself up and run, but once again, he fell. When everyone was cheering him on to complete the race, he got up, again, and this time, he ran till the end and completed the race. His completion in the race was inundated by the crowd’s applause. Impressed, I thought that his courage was admirable. If he was pessimistic and was devoid of courage, he could have walked till the end as it was only 15 meters away and he was already the last. True athletes are the ones with great courage, the ones who do their best even if they know they are going to lose the race.

Long distance running is a life-long lesson. It allows me to discover the other side of me: to realize that I have the ability to go beyond my boundaries. I believe in long distance running, with courage and determination, I can go the distance.